



Balancing the Total Force: An Ongoing Issue

Historical and current practices tend to encourage overuse of military personnel in positions that could be more efficiently staffed by civilians.

Potential cost savings (see chart) and clear DoD guidance support the practice of converting particular military positions to civilian ones. DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1100.22, Policies and Procedures for Determining Workforce Mix, describes the characteristics of positions that must be filled by military personnel. Other functions are to be staffed by the least expensive eligible personnel type—military or government civilian for inherently governmental functions and military, government civilian, or contractor for commercial functions.

DoDI 1100.22 provides guidance for determining workforce mix from the bottom up—that is, based on which personnel type is most appropriate for any given position. In practice, however, workforce mix is frequently managed from the top down, setting end strength and policies for military and government civilian personnel as a whole without regard to the specific functions each individual

(continued)

Military

Pay Grade O-5, 20 years of service

\$237

Civilian

Pay Grade GS-14, Step 5

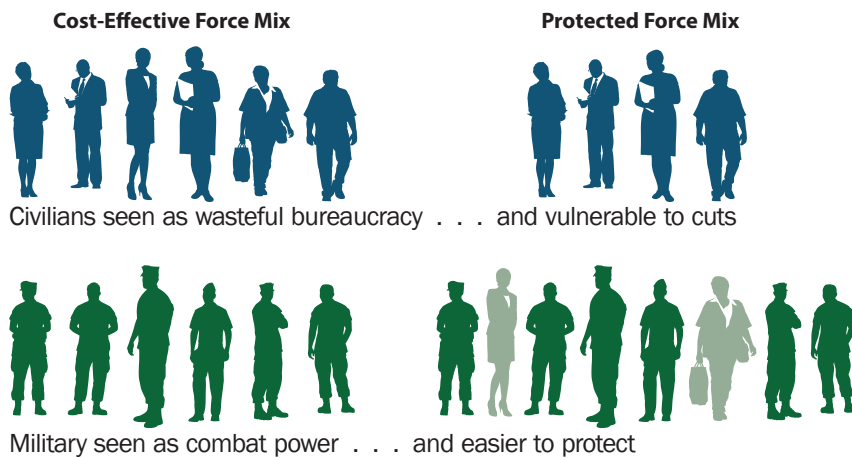
\$179

Source: DoDI 7041.04, *Estimating and Comparing the Full Costs of Civilian and Active Duty Military Manpower and Contract Support*

Full Cost of Sample Personnel (thousands of FY 2013 dollars)

is performing. This top-down management tends to encourage overuse of military in positions that could be more efficiently staffed by civilians, resulting in higher personnel costs and fewer uniformed personnel available for positions that require military performance.

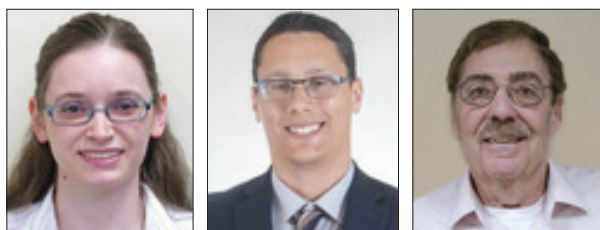
For example, Congress tends to view military personnel as combat power and civilian personnel as bureaucratic overhead. As a result, DoD civilian positions are more vulnerable to cuts during budget negotiations. To protect positions from future cuts, military departments retain them as military rather than civilian.



Hiring freezes, conversion bans, and across-the-board cuts are among the recent approaches to managing the civilian-to-military force mix. But these approaches do not solve the underlying problems that result in overuse of military personnel in non-military-essential positions. In fact, we have found that they often exacerbate the situation. Instead, we recommend that DoD implement “bottom-up” solutions that incentivize workforce managers to choose the most cost-effective personnel type that is eligible for each position according to DoDI 1100.22.

We examined two functional areas—Education and Training (E&T) and Personnel and Social Services (P&SS)—and found significant potential savings from civilianization. Current workforce mixes in these areas vary across military departments, suggesting opportunities to convert some military positions to civilian. In total, we estimate about 14,200 E&T and P&SS military positions could be converted to about 11,300 civilian positions, yielding about \$530 million per year in savings to DoD over the long run.

The two primary sources of savings are the tendency for civilian personnel to cost less than military personnel and the assumption, derived from evidence from previous civilianization efforts, that fewer civilians are required to replace a given number of military personnel. The freed-up military positions could be used for more critical military-essential functions or the savings could be used to improve force readiness. Either way, the DoD would be closer to achieving a workforce that balances capability, capacity, and lethality.



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Based on [IDA P-8270](#), *Managing the Total Force: Using Civilianization to Militarize the Military*, by D. F. Eisler, S. A. Horowitz, Nancy M. Huff, J. A. Pechacek, S. K. Whitehead, and L. Wu, November 2018. Research sponsored by the Office of the Director, Acquisition Resources and Analysis.